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YOUR 4-H

Home Furnishings

PROGRAM;

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

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MAKE IT MEANINGFUL, APPEALING, FORWARD-LOOKING



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This manual includes suggestions of a special committee of Extension Home Furnishings specialists, State 4-H staff members, and consultants.

YOUR 4-H Home Furnishings PROGRAM



OBJECTIVES

When we can help young people develop an awareness of beauty around them, we give them a depth of understanding and enrichment that will last a lifetime. Interesting, attractive home surroundings are important to the enjoyment of daily living.

Young people are marrying earlier today. They need help in learning how to plan the kind of homes they will have. It is well to teach them early to be creative with available furnishings, to become wiser consumers.

Young men and women today plan together for the new home they will establish. Through our 4-H Home Furnishings program we can help both boys and girls make the planning, the selection, and the establishing of the home a richer experience.

What are our objectives in the Home Furnishings program?

For youth to:

- Develop an appreciation of beauty and comfort in the home.
- Understand color and design for personal enjoyment.

- Gain confidence in planning living areas.
- Be creative, in keeping with needs of the family and the individual.
- Recognize attractive surroundings as basic to better family living.

For extension workers to:

- Appreciate the potential of art and design subject matter in developing mature, competent, responsible young people.
- Gain richer backgrounds which will enable them to apply their experiences in this area to all facets of family and personal living.
- Guide training of adult and junior leaders in this field; see that they get the kind of help that will instill confidence.
- Plan project material that will interest boys and girls in the younger age group, and that will stimulate and challenge teenagers.



You'll be meeting problems peculiar to the Home Furnishings program, and some that are common to all 4-H projects. Many problems concern the people we must involve—county extension staff, local leaders, and members and their families. What worries them? How can we impress them with the value of the program? Let's take a look . . .

FIRST, THE AGENT

The local home furnishings program will stand or fall with the county staff's enthusiasm or lack of it. Your chief problem may be that the county extension staff does not feel competent to teach in the home furnishings area. First, be sure you know what background your agents have in art and design.

Here are some ways you can give agents confidence:

- Supply them with good teaching materials for each age group.
- Set up stimulating workshops for agents.
- Encourage and demonstrate how to organize leader training meetings.
- Demonstrate kits of illustrative materials they can shop for and loan to local leaders, the materials to be ad-

justed to the understanding and use of various economic levels within the county.

- Plan shopping and "just looking" trips with extension agents whenever you are in a county, to help them see possibilities for illustrative material.
- Pool information from county reports and send out a "sharing letter."
- Keep agents informed of stimulating new books to read.
- Help them gain a new perspective in judging in this field. Dispense with the "right or wrong" theory and substitute "what things are good in this situation."

THE LEADER

You'll need to plan training meetings for agents to give them information on what and how to teach and to inspire them to want to teach. Extension agents in turn will need to hold training meetings for project leaders, to teach principles involved, the kind of illustrative material to use, and how to teach club members. Agents will need to inspire leaders to want to teach Home Furnishings. Leaders in the home furnishings area are hard to find because they also feel uncertain of their competence.

There may be but a few members in a club interested in Home Furnishings. An interested, well trained leader could combine the members of two or three clubs to provide stimulating and interesting experiences.

There are many resource people available. Perhaps we don't make good use of them. We need to know what they can do, the kind of information they are ready to give, how reliable is their source and whether it is unbiased. Can they give the kind of information young people find usable?

Project leaders trained for this work in home demonstration meetings are often pleased to be asked to extend their teaching. They may not feel they have the time to take over a 4-H project club but will gladly do one meeting. They may need some help on how to teach young people.

Some of our best resource people are former home economists. They usually want to be brought up to date so that they can be of real help. Others may be interior designers; florists; upholsterers; district rug salesmen; buyers of furniture, floor covering, china and accessories, etc.

They are interested in working with young people, but we need to be selective in how and why we use them. We need to tell them what we hope to have young people gain from the contact.

THE MEMBER

The club member has problems, too, that may make him hesitate to take on the Home Furnishings project. He may think it will cost too much. He may say "I don't have a room to do over." He needs the close cooperation of his family as he works with the family home. And, we know, young people like to work on a project they can exhibit—that's one of their tangible rewards—and home furnishings sounds difficult to take to the county fair!

These are big hurdles, but we can overcome them if we alert the extension agent in advance. Then she can help the local leader guide the teenager in setting up a workable project within his income.

Family Approval is important. The furnishings project is usually home oriented. The member's family must be understanding, sympathetic, and cooperative if the project is to be successful.

The leader must help the member see that he must consult his parents.

RECOGNITION

Since members think exhibiting will be a problem in the Home Furnishings project, we should point out to agents that there are other ways, in addition to exhibiting, to give members the recognition they need.

The agent could encourage:

- Club tours to see the work of members in its natural setting. Young people need to be prepared—given something to look for before they go.
- Pictures of the youngster and his accomplishment in the local paper, not necessarily the top county project winner but perhaps someone who has done one small piece of work very well.
- A feature story on someone who has completed an overall project involving the family and has solved a family furnishing problem.
- Recognize advanced members who work on a project at a children's home, a home for the aged, or a community building.
- Demonstrations and illustrated talks given by members at various kinds of meetings.

Exhibits may be easier than you think, however. True, it's difficult to show a complete arrangement of furniture in room size. But the member might exhibit a small display of room background colors and materials, depicting good design principles.

He might assume the table planning, including colors, dishes, cloths, and floral arrangements for a foods review, for district achievement days, for homemakers' achievement days or teas, or for community and church functions.

The young person could arrange displays in furniture and other stores.

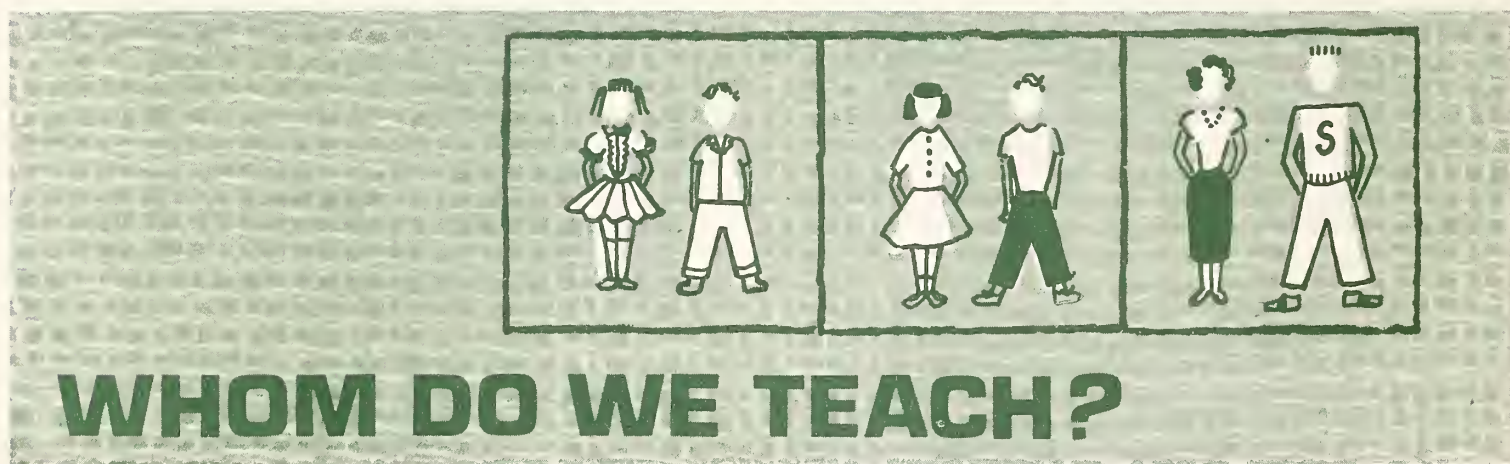
Do we always select for state and national recognition the records showing the biggest piece of work done? We should sometimes select a smaller piece that answers a need, showing quality workmanship, imaginative thinking, and good judgment in selection.

Though the youngster may think in terms of the blue ribbon he can win at the fair, *we* must think in terms of the development of the youngster.

EVALUATION

Let members evaluate their own Home Furnishings projects. A questionnaire pointing up the things to look for might be given to them. It could include:

1. Why did you choose this article to make or this task to do?
2. What art principles were involved in planning the article?
3. What problems did you solve by applying these principles?
4. Are the results satisfying? Do they meet the original need?
5. Does the quality of workmanship contribute to the total design of the article?
6. What did you gain through this experience?
7. How does it fit into your home? What is the family's opinion of the results?



Each member needs to plan and set up his own project. If this is to be a meaningful experience, both he and the leader must consider what he wants to do and is capable of doing in his home environment. The leader must know how to guide him, and show

understanding and sincere interest in his development.

The member's home background, the interest and cooperation of his parents, will determine where he can begin and how far

he can go. The leader must know this background to understand what kind and how much guidance she can give.

Too often, specific requirements and activities become the guide for project content. Extension workers and leaders sometimes think these are a must for standards of achievement. But projects need to be flexible and youngsters should be encouraged to plan achievable projects. It is better to add to the plan than not be able to accomplish it.

Planning projects according to age groups is important.

PRE-TEENS

The pre-teen is very enthusiastic and interested, eager to plan big things, but his interest span is short. Art and design activities can be exciting for this age. The challenge is to set up activities that can be finished in a short time, are within the understanding of this age group and can be a rewarding learning experience.

This youngster wants to learn how to do things. He looks to his leaders and parents for guidance and approval. Because leaders have a limited amount of time to spend with members, mothers need to be taught the goals, the content and scope of the project. We need to plan a variety of things to "do" or "make," because we do not know how much practice the member will need to learn a principle or a skill.

Children in this age group want to:

- Be useful.
- Have responsibility.
- Participate.
- Experience new things.
- Think for themselves.

EARLY TEENS

The early teen member wants to do more things. He can read directions and has learned how to handle tools. He is ready to experiment and explore but looks to adults for some guidance. He is beginning to recognize himself as an individual. Projects can have a wider scope, activities can be more inclusive. His interest in collecting things can be a challenge to art and design experimentation. Friends his own age become more important as does a place for entertaining these friends.

OLDER TEENS

The older teens are individuals wanting to assume adult responsibilities. They like the freedom to make their own choices. The challenge to us is to offer the kind of project that will help the member help himself. Many youngsters in this group are going steady, some are engaged. They need help, as a mature adult, from the leader and extension agent. They are not only willing but need to express their own ideas and work out their own solutions to problems. Plans for a room of their own at home or away from home enter the picture.

If the young person has a special aptitude he can be given guidance and encouragement to explore continuing education in art and design. With training and guidance he can be ready to assume junior leadership responsibilities.

This older boy or girl feels the need for making his own choices. Activities in art and design can open the door for experimenting and exploring to find the colors, the patterns, the texture combinations that express the individual's make-up and personality.

With this age group, too, we must allow for varied backgrounds and consider dif-

ferences in competence within the same group. We encourage them to explore and experiment to find out what is right for them.

BOYS

Boys as well as girls should be interested in Home Furnishings if the project is geared to their interests and experiences. They can be involved in a study of color, texture and design if it applies to their immediate needs and activities. A discussion on picture selection with a group of boys can be a stimulating experience. Refurnishing a room with paint and wallpaper as a result of a study of color and design is well within a boy's interest. Many are interested in the use of wood—the varieties and grain pattern. Refinishing and remodeling furniture could be a direct application of the study of texture and design.

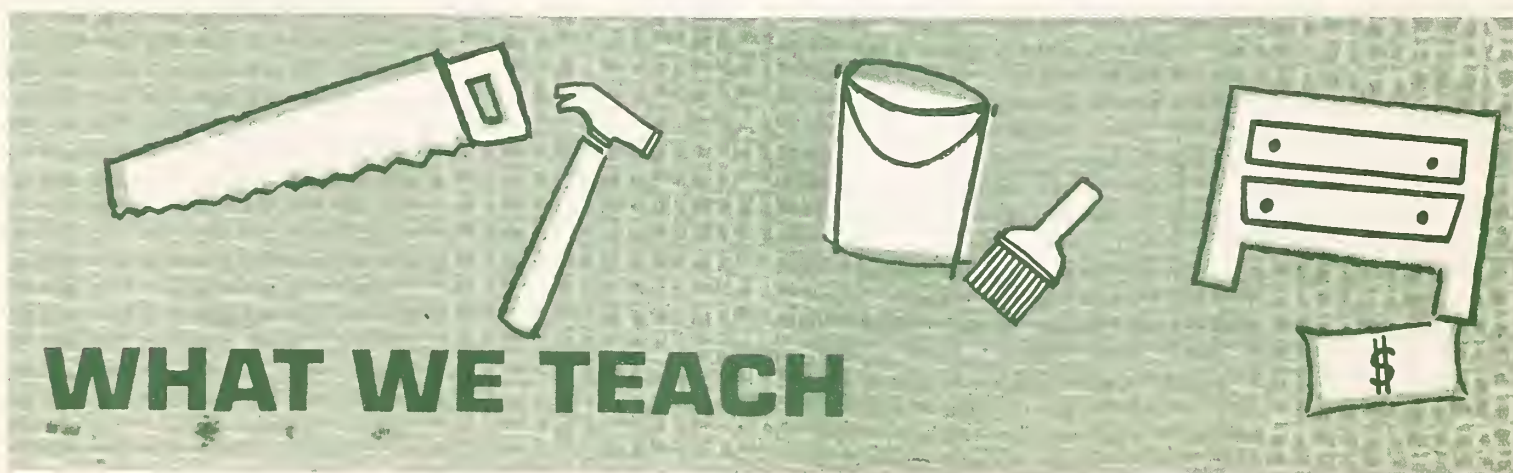
Because of the lack of responsibilities in home and family life for the average young boy today, home furnishings is an area in which he might become intensely interested. He needs to be allowed to develop his own plan and establish his own goals.

LOW INCOME GROUPS

Beauty will hob-nob with anyone who seeks her out—rich or poor. We have a responsibility to gear some of our project work specifically to the low income group. We do not always know their needs, but we can be informed through an afternoon's chat with a group of young people.

Painting a flower pot to hold a geranium, washing curtains for the window which houses the plant, salvaging furniture from second-hand stores, and grooming it for use, might be parts of this project. Young people could assume some of the responsibilities for a better furnished home.

Some agents say we set our standards too high for this group. We need to be willing to work for standards a little above where they are and be satisfied with the accomplishments, then move on to another step. Earned recognition should be a vital part of the work with this group. Walter Teague has said that there is no school where one can acquire even a trace of talent—but if a person has a spark in him the world today is full of many winds that will make it blaze.



Let's approach our planning by using the principles involved in the area we want to teach. The emphasis in overall extension teaching is on the "why" as well as "how." We so often get bogged down with trying to

dream up activities that we forget the "why" of the project.

Each of us has his own approach. We must examine our views, our strong points and our weaknesses before we plan to teach. Many

times our personal backgrounds, our feelings and reactions to experiences keep us from being flexible in our ideas. When we understand this we can be more objective in teaching.

We need to know about developments in other project areas to better correlate our own teachings. Art and design weave their way through all projects. They are vital in home furnishings. For instance, horticulture specialists can advise on what to plant in the garden; where and how to use flowers can be our contribution. We go to the lighting engineer to learn what kind of light is needed for each activity. We, in turn, should make certain that the lamps and lighting fixtures are well designed.

DESIGN

Design is the basis for everything we do in home furnishings. It is concerned with the use of line, with shape or form, with texture, colors and space. The way these elements are used results in a sense of order and beauty, and in some instances improves functional quality. We should teach that good design is not always expensive—and expensive things are not always well designed.

Some girls and boys have learned the terminology and principles of design at school. We can review these principles and help apply them to things they can see, use and understand.

They should learn to consider good design in selecting all household equipment. The principles apply in selecting even a coffee pot. Is it well balanced? Does it have a pleasing shape? Does it pour well?

We need to help leaders understand and teach how *proportion*, *balance*, *emphasis*, *rhythm*, and *line* are important to good design. Help them to see that proportion is the relationship between the parts of a design and that each unit needs to be in scale with other units around it. Help them to

avoid the monotony of dividing any area into equal spaces.

Let's see how we can plan projects demonstrating *proportion*, in ways that can be understood by members of different age groups. For example:

Pre-teens—Could choose a pot for a plant, size of a pillow for a bed.

Early teens—Could plan size of a picture for a wall space, size of a place mat for a table setting.

Older teens—Could plan size of a chair for a room unit, or choose a bookcase to fit the member's needs.

Young people can come to understand that *balance* creates a feeling of steadiness, of things looking as if they belong where they are. Activities for all ages of 4-H members could include working with blocks of colored paper to achieve balance or collecting magazine pictures of living areas to illustrate types of balance.

Emphasis—a center of interest or a place to look to—needs study.

Members can learn that *rhythm* allows the eye to move easily from one area to another in a space and that it is achieved through repetition of lines, of color, texture and space relations.

Likewise, they learn that *lines* have a language:

A vertical line is dignified, formal.

A horizontal line is quiet, restful.

A diagonal line is active—sometimes restless; if it is broken it is very restless.

A curved line is gentle, quiet, restful.

A tightly curved line is active and dynamic.

Members will grow in understanding that the lines chosen need to express the individual and can be repeated to achieve rhythm and give unity to the total space.

COLOR

Colorful, comfortable, convenient backgrounds are basic to satisfying family living. Color psychologists tell us that most people have decided color likes and dislikes, and may be affected emotionally by color in their surroundings. These are findings to explore with the Family Life and Child Development specialists. This information will help us understand the reactions of various age groups.

"What colors do you like and why?" is a good beginning for groups. It can lead to a discussion of personalities and color. It can help dispel color prejudices and false theories. Using a collection of terry cloth towels arranged so that some color combinations vibrate, could start a lively discussion. Studying advertisements, window displays, color in fabrics, can all lead to the ability to actually "see" color and note subtle tones as well as intense ones, to see why colors appear warm or cool.

To grow in knowledge of color, members can mix paints, mount paint chips, bits of color from magazine advertisements, or fabric samples. Color relationships can be studied quickly in clothing worn by club members. What does the color of one garment do for another? Does it enhance, subdue or change the color?

All ages could collect bits of things from nature—a shell, a feather, twig, leaf or flower. They could try to reproduce colors with colored paper, scraps of fabric, or poster paints. An abstract arrangement could be made using colored burlap as the background. Mounted, this could be used as a small wall hanging in the young person's own room. Pre-teens and early teens might like to see what happens to an intense color when another intense one is used with it. They can try using a series of more neutral colors and experiment with proportions.

Many kinds of activities could be suggested:

Pre-teens—Choose color for a pillow to use with a sofa. What effect does the color of each have on the other? Choose color of mat to use with a plate.

Early teens—Choose mat and frame color to use with a picture. Choose paint color to use for a desk chair.

Older teens—Plan color for a boy's or girl's room. Choose color for bedspread. Plan color for draperies in a family room.

TEXTURE

Texture is a third important element to consider along with design and color in choosing home furnishings.

Rough or smooth, shiny or dull, coarse or fine, hard or soft—tells something about the texture of the fabric or furnishings in a room.

Activities for all ages in studying texture might include a game using a number of envelopes containing many different samples—feather, piece of velvet, cleaning pad, bit of cotton, etc. Members guess what they are by touch.

Young people can also experiment with a wide variety of materials to note the effect of texture on color.

Pre-teens—Bring in samples of many different textures. Which ones do they like? What kinds of textures can be used for a pillow?

Early teens—Find illustrations of how texture affects design. Which material textures are suited to member's room, the kitchen or bath?

Older teens—Find the texture of material for a cloth to go with chosen dishes. Find the texture of floor covering for member's room.

HOW TO DO—WHAT TO MAKE

Work sheets on “how to do and what to make” can be used when young people are ready for them. Demonstrations on “how to do” need to accompany them. The demonstrations need to be short, to the point, and written so the leader can interpret them quickly.

Perhaps it is more important to give intensive training in design and art principles and their application than in perfecting construction skills.

“How to choose” is perhaps more important than “How to make.”

We need to emphasize this, and teach all ages what to look for when they buy home furnishings. The member should ask these questions when deciding whether to buy, make, or refinish a piece of furniture:

- How much money can I spend?
- Do I have one to refinish?
- Is it worth the work of refinishing?
- What do I need to find out to do a good job of refinishing?
- Where can I get this information?

If he decides to buy, he should ask:

- Is it a good height for me?
- Is it large enough?
- Is it made well? What should I look for to see if it is well made?

If he makes the piece of furniture, he should ask:

- How do I get the design?
- Where can I get help?
- What materials will I use? Where can I get them?
- What kind of finish will I use and how will I apply it?

A similar check sheet could be used for other decisions members need to make in the Home Furnishings area:

A *pre-teen* member could choose:

- Tumblers to go with family dishes.
- Paper napkins to go with family dishes.
- Simple curtains for his own room, the kitchen or bathroom.
- Pillows for the davenport.

An *early teen* member could choose:

- Terry towels for the bathroom.
- Wallpaper for his own room.
- Paint for wall covering or furniture.
- A frame for a picture.

An *older member* might choose:

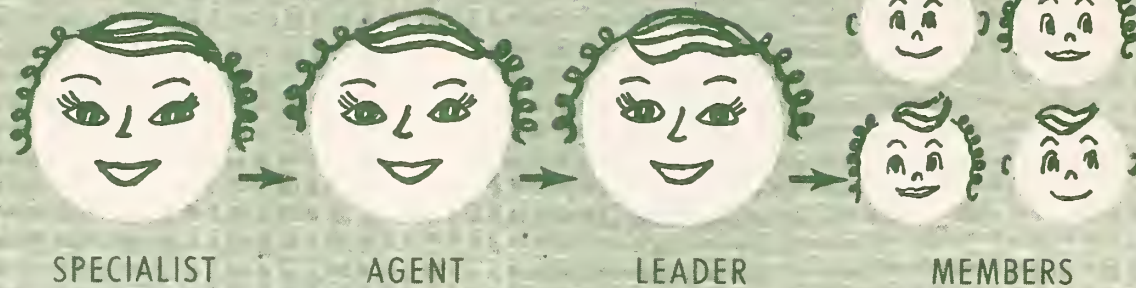
- China, glassware, silver, linens for himself.
- Draperies for a specific room.

Choosing tableware will interest the advanced group. This may lead to their asking for help with other furnishings later. Thus we help young people before the “young bride” stage—before major purchases have been made.

Repeating an experience is not a waste of time if it is a learning experience. One 4-H girl used the problem of making a cloth to use with family dishes 3 years in succession. These cloths made excellent demonstration material because they pointed up the learning and progress of the girl during the 3 years she had used this as a part of her project work. This was her choice, therefore she did not mind the repetition. We know we learn by repetition yet extension workers are fearful of having someone say “I’ve had that.” We probably underestimate the amount of practice it takes to learn.

Children of the same chronological age can vary as much as 6 years in maturity. Therefore, we need to use the material we have and apply it to fit the understandings and abilities of individuals.

TRAINING



EXTENSION AGENTS

Agents need special training in Home Furnishings. To give them the inspiration and help they need to do a good job, we must:

- Analyze objectively the problems characteristic of our state and find ways to solve them. Use them as a challenge rather than a stumbling block. This helps the agent solve county problems.
- Give agents the teaching helps that will encourage them to experiment on their own, and the kind of teaching skills they can use to develop competent leaders in this area.
- Show how to use subject matter which can be effectively taught by the leader in the short time she has for teaching.
- Use as many kinds of illustrative materials as possible.
- Review with agents the interests and characteristics of various age groups to show how teaching in our area can be applied to these different groups.
- Help them see how this subject matter area is part of all the work they do in Home Economics Extension.

PROJECT LEADERS

We should help agents understand the characteristics of an effective project leader in the area of Home Furnishings. The leader needs to:

- Have an aptitude for this area.
- Have a keen interest and be eager to learn more.
- Be aware of the background of the young people in her group. She can then better guide each one to plan a project within his capabilities, economic level, and understanding.
- Be flexible in her thinking and methods of working so that she can adapt to the philosophy and scope of the area.
- Be willing to experiment along with the young people to help them get the satisfaction possible from this work.
- Be able to see how far each member can go—when to “add to”—when and how to repeat experiences.
- Know how to “guide” not “tell.”

The agent may make use of the talents of leaders trained in other fields. For instance,

clothing leaders in both adult and 4-H groups have had intensive training in techniques and skills. Could the agent consider enlisting their help in teaching these skills? We might reciprocate by suggesting that leaders in our field be used to teach the use of color in clothing or foods. This is but one of the several ways we could make better use of trained leaders.

Mrs. Rosa Johnston, Massachusetts Home Furnishings Specialist, drew the following conclusion in her thesis on *The Analysis of the Art and Design Interest of the 4-H Leader*.

"The interpretation of the data indicated that 4-H leaders in Massachusetts were interested in the subject area of art and design as measured by the Art Interest Inventory. However, only 40 percent indicated any formal education in the subject area; 67 percent felt that what training they have at present is inadequate to lead a 4-H club. Fifty-seven percent of the leaders rated art and design subject matter 'important' in the club program. Approximately one-third of the leaders involved in this study had more than 5 years experience as a 4-H club leader. One of the strengths of the 4-H program is in the continuity of the lay leadership. However, if art and design are to have a place in the educational program of 4-H, there must be inservice training for the leader. The inservice training program must be based on the current concepts in art and design education and the present training and interest of the 4-H leader."

The local leader needs and wants help. Here are some ways the extension agent can assist her:

1. Inspire her to want to teach.
2. Teach her the philosophy and scope of the Home Furnishings project—what it can do in the personal development of the young person.
3. Teach her how to talk with members to determine what they would like to do and what they can do.

4. Give specific training in what to teach and how much to include in each meeting.
5. Help her experiment with materials—learn by doing. This will help convince her that young people need these experiences.
6. Teach her how to prepare or assemble illustrative materials and how to use material available in the extension office.
7. Train her to teach members how to use bulletins.
8. Show her how and where to obtain other help she needs.
9. Tell her ways to check the effectiveness of the program.
10. Teach her how to select and train junior leaders.

Junior leaders can:

- Find interesting examples.
 - Prepare visuals for younger members.
 - Train first year members in one or two small units of work.
 - Plan exercises, experiments, games for project meetings.
 - Take over planning of exhibits with the guidance of the adult leader.
11. Help her plan tours. Urge the leader to visit the locale herself before she takes a group. Help her see that 4-H members need some guidance before a tour. She should tell them what to look for and give a summary at the end to clear up any misinformation.

Suggest kinds of tours. These may be to:

- The homes of members to see progress in individual work.
- Commercial places such as furniture stores, to see china, rug and drapery departments.
- Florist shops and greenhouses.
- Art galleries and museums.
- Furniture factories.
- Interior decorator shops, paint stores.
- Visit craftsmen in woodworking, pottery, jewelry, etc.

- A home designed by an imaginative designer or a historic home open to the public.
- A university art department to see current exhibits or talk with the faculty.
- Out of doors to see Nature's design.

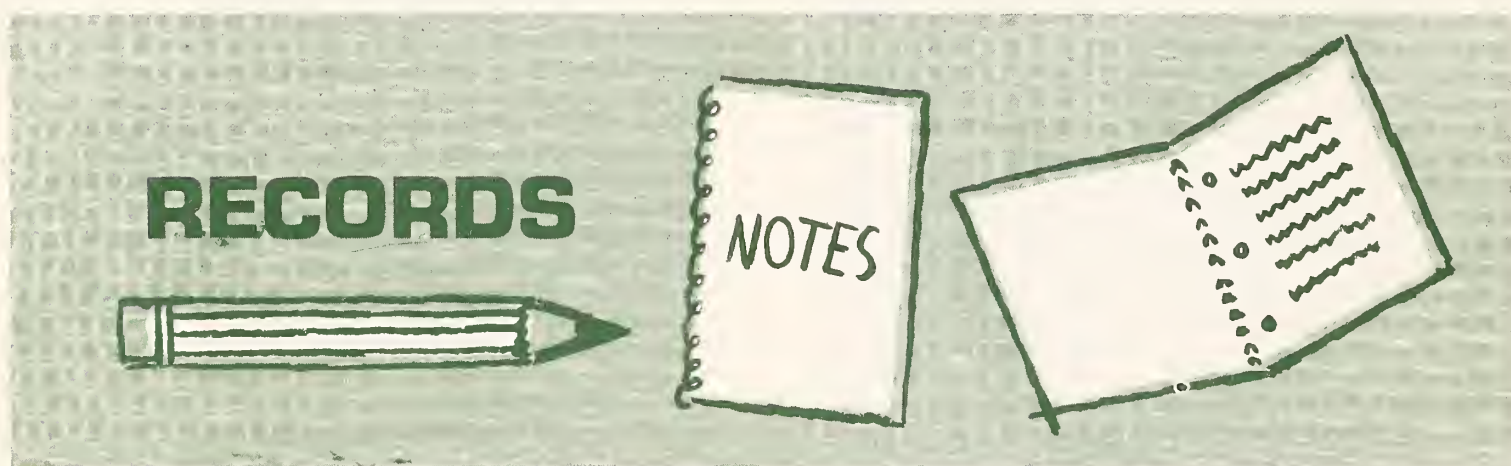
The leader should not go too far too fast or she'll lose them! A 2-day trip to an unfamiliar city would not help young members comprehend what they see. A half-day trip to their own shopping area will show them the well designed things they can find there. An experienced member will welcome a more involved tour.

Leaders need a teaching guide that includes:

1. Methods of planning a project with the 4-H member in the three age groups. How to plan with a boy who is interested, as well as with a girl.
2. Outlines of specific small units of the project including principles to be taught and how to teach them and ex-

amples and visuals she can use and how to use them.

3. Information on how to prepare herself for the project meeting and kinds of assignments she can give to the members for the next meeting.
4. How to make these units flexible so that they can meet individual needs and competencies.
5. A number of suggestions for extending the unit so that she will be prepared to take care of the "What can I do?" question.
6. Resources available for further help.
7. Help on how to get parent cooperation.
8. A list of tours members can take.
9. How and where to exhibit.
10. How to evaluate the work of the member.
11. What information is needed by the county office.
12. How to encourage the member to continue working in this area another year.



Records could be fun for members to keep.

"What will I include in my record" could be a decision made by the project club at one of the first meetings. "What does a record mean to me?" "What would I like to know about my project?" "How do I learn how much I've accomplished?" Asking these questions at the first meeting might encourage members to keep records from the beginning.

Leaders need to know what information the county needs in order to guide club members in developing a record. Perhaps the leader would like to know some of these things:

- What is the member like—how old is he, how long has he taken this project?
- What would he like to learn from this project?

- What does he like—what colors, textures, what kind of designs?
- What does he think he can do? What does he want to do? This could include an outline of things he feels he can accomplish this year. He can be encouraged to start with a small plan and add to it if there is time.
- What is being done this year compared to what was done last year?
- Story of how the project work has helped him enjoy some of the trips he has taken with family and friends. Also how these experiences have added to his understanding of project work.
- What was done in relation to family needs and goals? How did family members help?

The member can write up each experience at the time he completes it and include illustrations. Activities can be written up and related to principles learned to determine whether the member understands the principles and knows how to apply them.

This kind of record will help the leader and extension worker know where the young person was at the start of the project, his interests, his progress, and his development during the year.

RESULTS

What results can we expect?

We hope to see a group of young people aware of the things around them, interested in what they see as they go about the business of everyday living. We want young people aware that they have something to contribute to their own and family comfort in the home. We hope to see them develop a feeling for beauty so that they can be selective in those things with which they surround themselves. Through the Home Furnishings project we can help them attain these goals.

REFERENCES TO HELP YOU

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